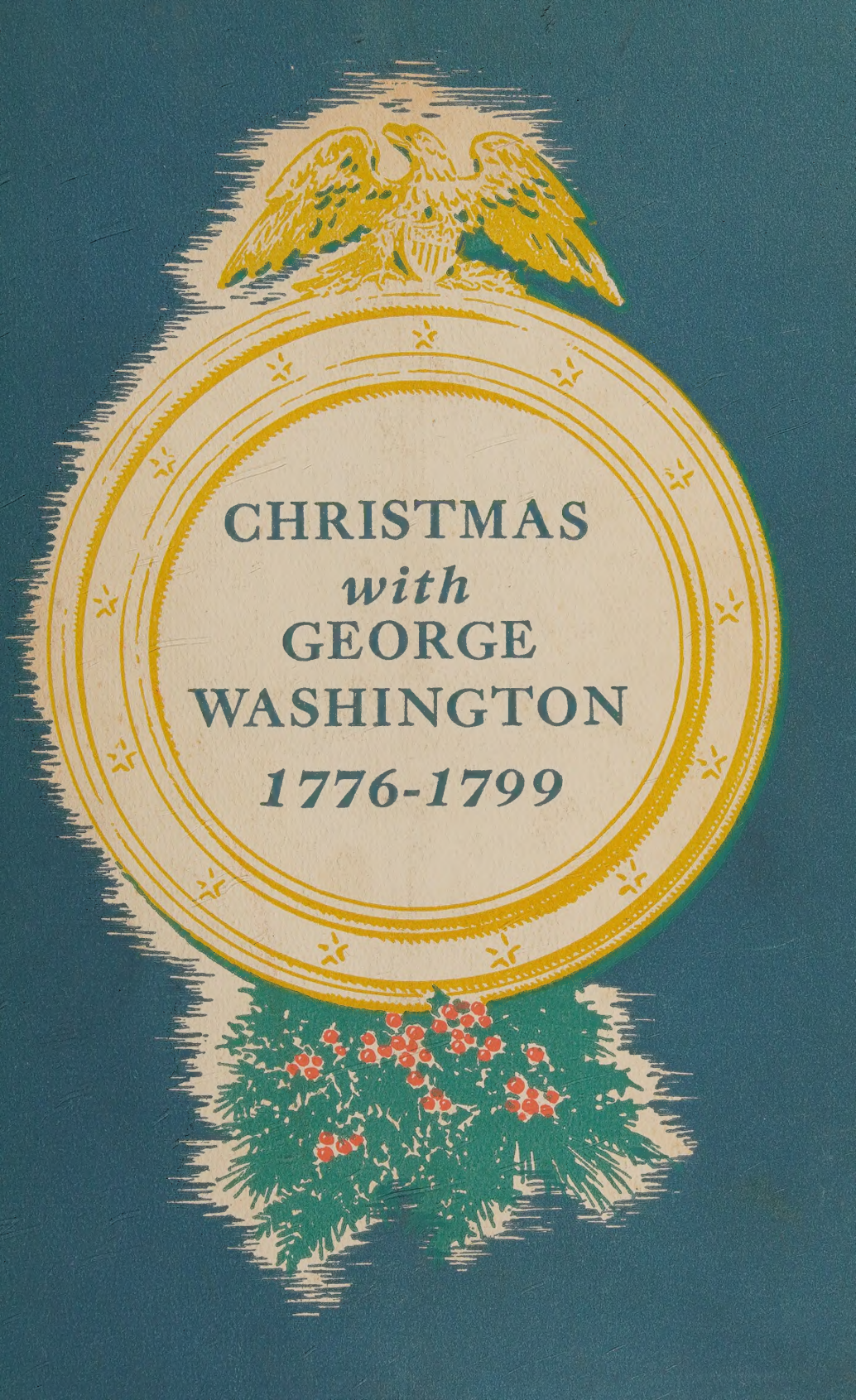
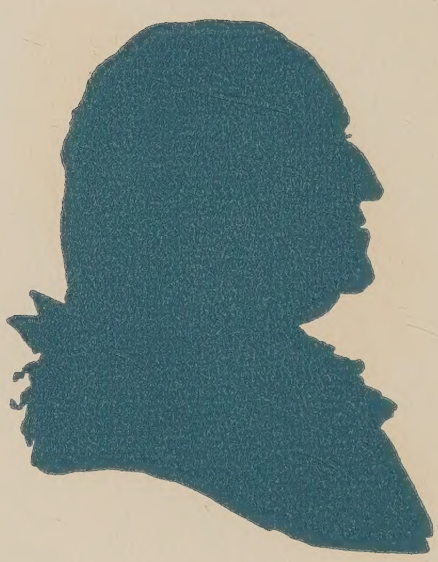

CHRISTMAS
with
GEORGE
WASHINGTON
1776-1799



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CHRISTMAS *with* GEORGE WASHINGTON *1776-1799*

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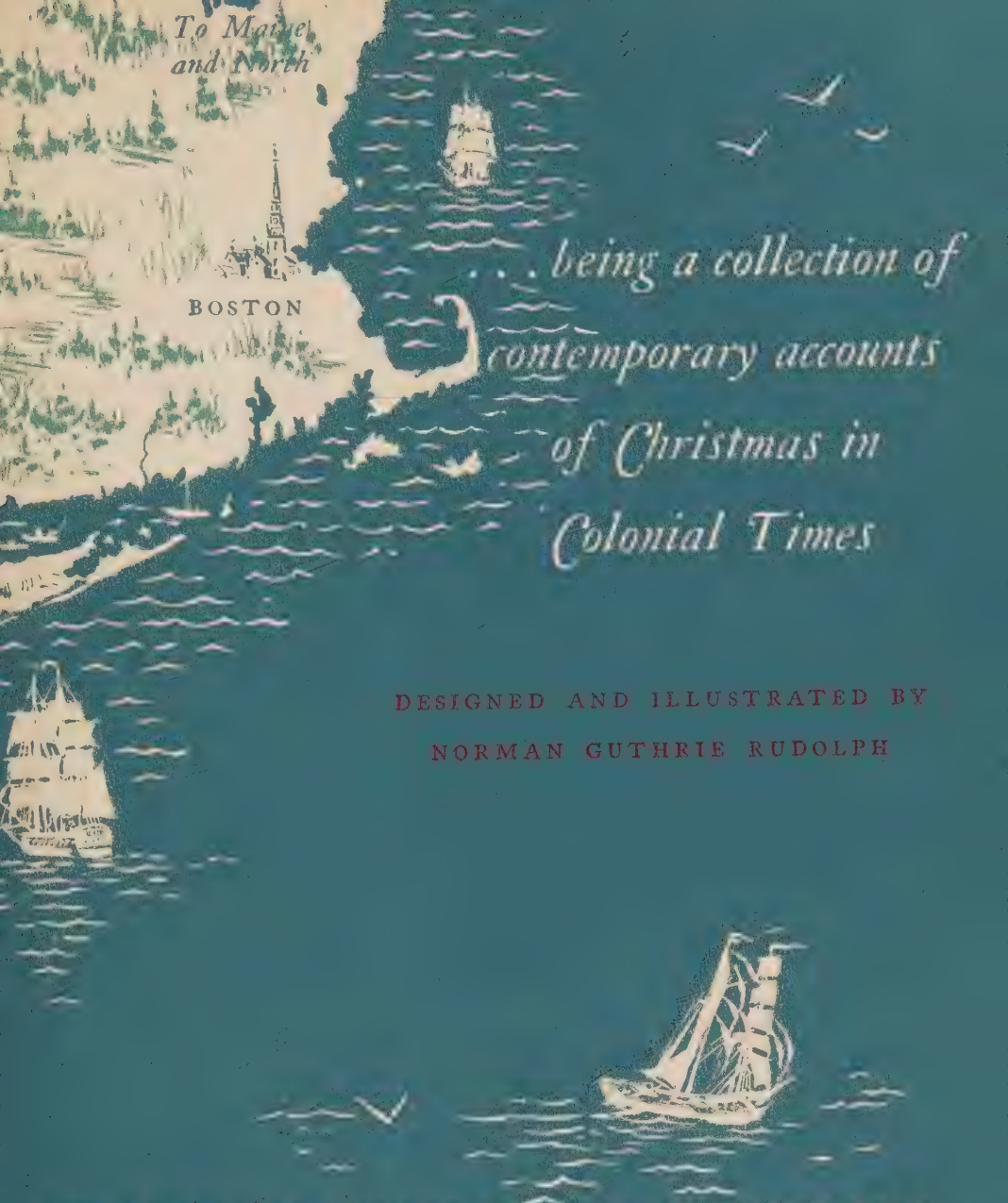
Christmas
with
GEORGE
WASHINGTON
NEW YORK
TRENTON
PHILADELPHIA
MOUNT VERNON
To Georgia,
Carolinas and
South



. . . being a collection of contemporary accounts of Christmas in Colonial Times

DESIGNED AND ILLUSTRATED BY

NORMAN GUTHRIE RUDOLPH

FRANKLIN PRINTING COMPANY

Since the Spring of 1728

PHILADELPHIA

Christmas in Washington's time! How we modern mortals, harassed by our ever-lengthening shopping lists, deafened by the din of commercial offerings, envy the picture these words conjure! The gracious host, the steaming bowl, the leisurely, sparkling conversation around a table laden bountifully with foods that whet our appetites just thinking about them.

Yes, and the pleasant meeting of friends and neighbors at church, for Christmas is a day of reverent remembrance, even though it has not always been possible for us to spend it in the peace on earth of the Christmas hope.

Even in Washington's time the Christmas season was not always peaceful. For, just 178 years ago this Christmas night, Washington and his men were risking a perilous crossing through the ice floes of the Delaware to fall on the Hessians at Trenton who had celebrated Christmas too well. A year later a doctor with Washington's men at Valley Forge was consoling himself for his meager fare with the thought that so many others had nothing.

Yet excerpts from diaries and letters which have come down to us from the days of our Nation's beginning do show that Christmases with Washington were days of joyous celebration differing from ours only in tempo.

We are grateful for the privilege of quoting a few of these notes on "Christmas with George Washington" as our holiday greeting, and these quotations come to you with our hope that your Christmas in 1954 may be a most happy occasion.

FRANKLIN PRINTING COMPANY

December 25, 1954.

A NOTABLE CHRISTMAS WITH WASHINGTON

(In camp above Trenton Falls, Dec. 23, 1776)

"Christmas day at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us." Washington to Col. Codwalader. On Christmas night Washington crossed the Delaware, surprising the Hessians in Trenton on the morning of the 26th, and capturing nearly a thousand prisoners with their arms. On Friday, Dec. 27, he sent the following message to the President of Congress:

"I have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the success of an enterprise, which I had formed against a detachment of the enemy lying in Trenton, and which was executed yesterday morning."

A CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER WITH

(Being a letter from Theophilus Bradbury

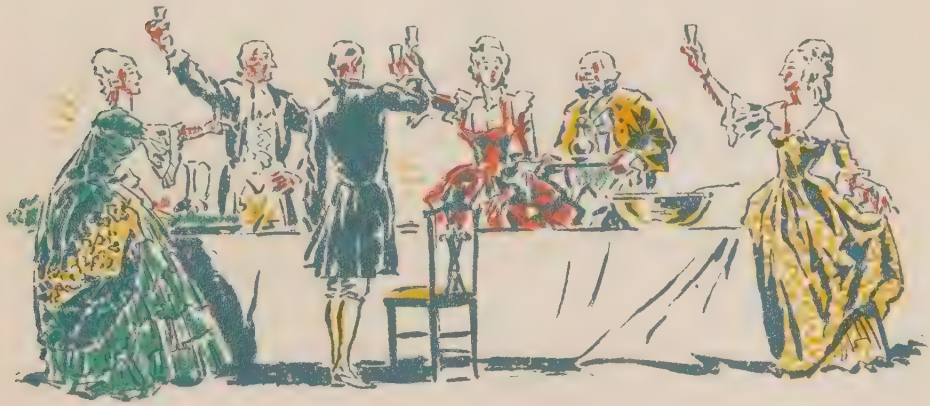
Philadelphia, Sat. Dec. 26—1795.

"Last Thursday I had the honor of dining with the President in company with the Vice President, the Senators, the Delegates of Massachusetts, and some other members of Congress, about 20, in all.

"In the middle of the table was placed a piece of table furniture about six feet long and two feet wide, rounded at the ends. It was either of wood gilded, or polished metal, raised about an inch with a silver rim round it like that round a tea board; in the centre was a pedestal of plaster of Paris with images upon

it, and on each end figures, male and female, of the same. It was very elegant and used for ornament only. The dishes were placed all around, and there was an elegant variety of roast beef, veal, turkeys, ducks, fowls, hams, etc.; puddings, jellies, oranges, apples, nuts, almonds, figs, raisins, and a variety of wines and punch.

"We took our leave at six, more than an hour after the candles were introduced. No lady but Mrs. Washington dined with us. We were waited on by four or five men servants dressed in livery."



CHRISTMAS WITH WASHINGTON AT MOUNT VERNON

(The wife of Judge Cushing writes in February, 1799)

"We reached Mount Vernon the evening before Christmas, and if anything could have added to our enjoyment, it was the arrival of General and Mrs Pinckney the next day, while we were dining. You may be sure it was a joyful meeting, and at the very place my wishes had pointed out. To be in the company of so many esteemed friends, to hear our good General Washington converse upon political subjects without reserve, and to hear General and Mrs Pinckney relate what they saw and heard in France, was truly a feast to me. Thus the moments glided away for two days, when our reason pointed out the propriety of our departing and improving the good roads, as the snow and frost had made them better than they are in summer."

RUDOLPH

CHRISTMAS AT VALLEY FORGE

December 25th, Christmas.

"We are still in Tents — when we ought to be in huts — the poor Sick suffer much in Tents this cold Weather — I am ashamed to say it, but I am tempted to steal Fowls if I could find them — or even a whole Hog — for I feel as if I could eat one. But the Impoverish'd Country about us, affords but little matter to employ a Thief — or keep a Clever Fellow in good humour — But why do I talk of hunger & hard usage, when so many in the World have not even firecake & Water to eat. . . "

WASHINGTON'S CHRISTMAS IN NEW YORK

"Last Monday the anniversary of St. Nicholas, otherwise called Santa Claus, was celebrated at Protestant Hall, at Mr. L. Waldron's where a great number of the sons of that ancient saint celebrated the day with great joy and festivity."

A QUIET CHRISTMAS WITH WASHINGTON IN NEW YORK

Friday, Dec. 25th—Christmas Day.

"Went to St. Pauls Chapel in the forenoon. The visitors to Mrs. Washington this afternoon were not numerous, but respectable."

Washington's Diary.

CHRISTMAS IN VIRGINIA WITH WASHINGTON

"The extreame winde, rayne, frost and snow caused us to keepe Christmas among the salvages where we were never more merry, nor fed on more plenty of good Oysters, Fish, Flesh, Wilde fowl and good bread, nor never had better fires in England."

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